

November 25, 2013

To: Austin City Council Representatives

From: Louis Laves-Webb

Re: Sound Wall #3

In February of 2013, I purchased a home for me and my son located at 6501 Great Northern Blvd. Upon moving in, I became aware of the 20 foot sound wall that is proposed to stand exactly 50 feet across my front door. Please note that I, along with the majority of my neighbors along Great Northern Blvd am opposed to the building of sound wall#3. Graffiti, earlier sunsets, and the destruction of our environment are among many of the reasons for my opposition. You will hear many more reasons today in addition to the above-mentioned; please take our opposition seriously. We have gone through every appropriate channel and now we need your understanding and assistance, so that this very expensive and unwanted sound wall #3 does not simply inert itself into existence because it's easier than re-examining the sound wall parameters or taking another vote of the homeowners in the area. Once the bulldozers begin ripping through Great Northern, there is no way back.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Louis Laves-Webb

2011 Mopac Sound Wall Ballot

Voter ID #: W0008
Neighborhood: West Austin
Sound Wall #: 23
Workshop #: 2

Dear Property Owner,

Please check one box below "for" or "against" a proposed sound wall in the proximity of your property. *Your own vote is allowed for more assembly.*

☐ For Sound Wall
☐ Against Sound Wall

SIGNATURE (required) _____ DATE _____

Please bring this ballot with you to the sound wall workshop. If you cannot attend a workshop, please mail this ballot no later than Monday, August 29, 2011 to the address below:

TxDOT - Austin District
Environmental Section
ATTN: District Environmental Coordinator
P.O. Box 15426
Austin, Texas 78761-5426

◀◀ MOPAC
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT ▶▶

Estimated
sound
reduction ?

Location ?

Height ?

Length ?

details
(Only
available at
Workshops)



Andy Johnston's
train watching
platform for his
disabled daughter.

If he had known
about the 20'
sound wall plans
he would have
come and talked
to City Council in
2011.

The following tables list potential yearly cost estimates for graffiti abatement on Sound Wall #3. The 25 year estimates do not account for inflation. The 25-year estimates do not represent a termination of costs, as costs will continue into the indefinite future. The City of Austin's actual compounded costs (personnel, materials, etc.) for abatement should be used in place of the assumed numbers if available, as these will provide a more accurate estimate.

Assumption – per year, wall is defaced over a total 20% of its surface area (34,864 sq ft):

Sq Feet	Cost Factor	Yearly expense	25 year expense*
34,864	\$33.04 per incident, 0.86 / square foot (assuming 200 incidents)	\$36,591.04	\$914,776.00
34,864	\$4.32 / square foot	\$150,612.48	\$3,765,312.00
34,864	\$1.75 / square foot (without other compounded costs)	\$61,120.00	\$1,528,000.00

Assumption – per year, wall is defaced over a total 30% of its surface area (52,296 sq ft):

Sq Feet	Cost Factor	Yearly expense	25 year expense*
52,296	\$33.04 per incident, 0.86 / square foot (assuming 200 incidents)	\$44,974.56	\$1,124,364.00
52,296	\$4.32 / square foot	\$225,918.72	\$5,647,968.00
52,296	\$1.75 / square foot (without other compounded costs)	\$91,518.00	\$2,287,950.00

Assumption – per year, wall is defaced over a total 40% of its surface area (69,728 sq ft):

Sq Feet	Cost Factor	Yearly expense	25 year expense*
69,728	\$33.04 per incident, 0.86 / square foot (assuming 200 incidents)	\$66,574.08	\$1,664,352.00
69,728	\$4.32 / square foot	\$301,224.96	\$7,530,624.00
69,728	\$1.75 / square foot (without other compounded costs)	\$122,024.00	\$3,050,600.00

C. Maintenance Costs

There is limited data on incurred inspection and maintenance costs for sound walls. The assumption of the author is that this maintenance is typically performed by highway departments in the course of inspections/maintenance to the highway system as a whole, so that sound wall-related costs are not segregated.

It is, however, clear, that there will be maintenance and inspection costs. The standard federal guidance for the design of sound walls is the Federal Highway Administration's Noise Barrier

http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_21156485/walnut-creek-council-oks-expensive-sound-wall-repair

- October 2013. Virginia Department of Transportation remove two sections of sound walls for safety reasons, as walls were “leaning dangerously.” http://m.tricities.com/news/local/article_7f0f29da-2aa9-11e3-8c29-0019bb30f31a.html?mode=jgm

As stated previously, cost estimates for sound wall maintenance are difficult to find. Our open records requests to TxDot and CTRMA have not yet resulted in maintenance cost figures as to sound walls.

To provide some context, we refer to a thorough October 2012 review of sound walls, conducted by the York Regional Municipality of Canada.¹⁷ Although the figures contained in this review appear high to the author (and may incorporate the relatively high cost of graffiti abatement), they are presented for evaluation as they are the only hard figures we could locate. Figures were originally in metric and in Canadian dollars; the original figure prior to conversion is shown in parenthesis, with Canadian dollars converted at 1:1 to the US dollar.

Sound Barrier – Town of Aurora, York, Canada

Length: 5521 ft. (1683 meters)	Maintenance: Annual inspection, painting every five years, replacement of deteriorated boards every 10 years, replacement of all panels every 30 years.	Maintenance cost per year per unit of length: \$34.00/3.28 linear feet (\$34.00 Canadian / 1 meter)
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The sound barrier discussed above is of particular interest given its similar length to Sound Wall #3’s 5309 linear feet. If the maintenance assumptions of this study are applied to Sound Wall #3, the following maintenance figures are reached:

Yearly Cost of Maintenance of Sound Wall #3 (5309 linear feet)	\$55,032.32
25 Year Cost of Maintenance of Sound Wall #3 (5309 linear feet). Assuming no inflation.	\$1,375,807.93

The York report concludes that the maintenance of two sound barriers (the above-referenced Aurora barrier and a second barrier of 6939 feet (2115 meters) “will add \$138,000/year to the operations budget.” Scans of relevant pages from the York study are attached hereto.¹⁸

¹⁷“Lessons Learned During Implementation of Noise Barriers on Capital Projects” and attachments, http://www.york.ca/Regional+Government/Agendas+Minutes+and+Reports/_2012/pdf+TSC+9-1.htm

¹⁸ See the attached Exhibit H.